

Contributions

ON ADVICE TO PREACHERS

J. M. BOWMAN

Not long since the statement was made in a rather widely read religious journal in the department of Helps to Ministers concerning Philip's preaching at Samaria, that he preached *doctrine* in view of the fact that many were baptized. The same conclusion was drawn from his baptizing the Etheopean officer. This was made an example of the right sort of preaching and ministers urged to preach *doctrine*. The flavor of it all was that baptism and a few other forms of Christian practice are the great things to be dwelt upon in teaching and preaching. The spirit of the journal seems to be that a few particular practices are the great teachings of the scriptures. And it is quite possible that most of us have a very, very narrow idea of the immense reach of God's word.

In certain quarters much is said about teaching "a full gospel" or "the whole gospel" as some like well worn expressions. The gospel is glad news or tidings. News from God himself that lost and ruined and helpless men and women can be helped out of their sad plight. I have listened to many stories by those who have been lost on these western plains. And as they told of striking some trail, or hearing sounds, or seeing a distant light, I could see how the whole being was thrilled with the hope of being found or finding their way to safety. The gospel is the trail or the light to the group of travelers coming in the way of the one who is lost. It is the glad word that the ruin and bondage and blight of sin can be stopped and cured. That Christ can and will save all who are borne down and burdened and troubled and give them liberty and safety and peace is "Glad tidings."

Then, too, the scriptures are full of great themes for one to preach from that always prove profitable and are eagerly listened to. "Preach doctrine," or "The doctrine?" Yes indeed. The doctrine of God. Of his righteousness and justice and mercy and grace and awful wrath and hatred of sin, rebellion and self righteousness. Of sin and its tremendous consequences. Of salvation by faith in Christ and a thousand other great doctrines of scripture that is born into the hearts of those who hear. Then don't always put out the fire with water before closing. It will be a glad day for many devout people when their pastor determines never to preach a set sermon on baptism but finds occasion to privately show all earnest enquirers the way in which to walk. But men who have never realized their lost condition in a considerable degree and enjoyed the peace and safety of a known personal salvation; and have not a sense of the present keeping power of a divine Savior, will never preach any doctrine with any great power and never any glad tidings for they don't know any.

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APOSTOLIC BAPTISM—Historical

I. D. BOWMAN

Both the Bible and history clearly teach that the apostolic mode of baptism was Trine Dipping. Sprinkling, pouring and Thomas Muntzer's backward single immersion are the inventions of men, as every candid student can prove beyond doubt. All, as far as I know, who have honestly investigated the subject, have been convinced of Trine Immersion; but love for "the god of custom" and popularity have caused thousands to reject it after being convinced. Space will admit of but little of the historical proof, but enough to convince every impartial candid reader.

1. Dionysius, the Areopagite born in the first century. "As Jesus remained three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, so the three immersions represent the three nights and the three emersions the three days." *Baptism and Baptisteries*. P. 34.

2. The *Didache*. Written between A. D. 70-150, "Having first given all the preceeding instruction, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost in living water. But if thou hast not living water baptize into other water; and if thou canst not in cold then in warm. But if thou hast neither, pour water on the head three times, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Then the one who baptizes and the one baptized are commanded to fast one or two days. This document was found in an old library in Jerusalem in 1873 by a great Greek priest, and has every proof of being written at the date given. Dr. Schaff, acknowledged to be the greatest and most impartial church historian of the century just closed, thought it of so much importance that he wrote a book concerning its teachings, entitled "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles." On page 12 he says: "The newly discovered document promised a long desired answer to many historical questions, because the 'Post-Apostolic age' from the destruction of Jerusalem to the middle of the second century is the darkest, that is, the least known, in church history." This is why it caused such a sensation when found. In commenting upon its teaching, concerning baptism, he says: (1) "The normal and favorite mode of baptism is three fold immersion. Immersion must be meant, otherwise there would be no difference between the first mode and the last which is aspersion or pouring. Besides it is the proper meaning of the Greek word here used." (2) In his comments on "But if thou hast neither, pour water on the head three times," he says ("e. g. that is if converted in a desert, or on a mountain, or in a prison, or in a catacomb.") He also says: "The aspersion of the head was the nearest substitute for the total immersion." Here Mr. Schaff, a member of the Reformed church and president of a Presbyterian college, declares that the *Didache* teaches that

trine immersion must be performed unless impossible and then says they substituted aspersion for baptism. Schaff well says that while the *Didache* is very valuable "It is historical and historical only." It commanded a days fasting, the gospel allows none, but applicants were baptized on the day of conversion; the gospel commands trine immersion, but does not give a substitute when it cannot be performed. Hence we can see a slight deviation from the gospel teaching in this early age.

3. Justin Martyr, born at the close of the first century. "They are brought by us to a place where there is water and are regenerated in the same manner in which we ourselves were regenerated, for in the name of the Father and Lord of the whole universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water." For Christ also said: "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." John 3:5. Here we learn that born of water refers to baptism. Schaff well says that immersion is here referred to "since water sufficient for pouring and sprinkling could be found in every house."

4. Turtullian born between 150 and 200 A. D.: "Christ appointed baptism to be administered not in the name of one, but three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, therefore we are dipped, not once, but thrice, in every person." *Duncan's history of baptism*, P. 129. Schaff says "Turtullean insists on trine immersion."

Dear reader please notice that we, so far, have been considering the darkest age of church history—the anti-Nicene age, and yet the teaching is clear. Listen what Schaff says about it: "Thus explained, the directions of the *Didache* are perfectly clear and consistent with all the other information we have on baptism in the anti-Nicene age. Trine immersion into the triune name was the rule, as it is to this day in all Oriental countries." P. 34.

We have made clear that Trine Immersion was the prevailing mode of baptism from the death of John the Baptist—near the end of the first century, until the end of the second century: and from this date we have clear sailing; history is so clear and abundant that the worst enemies to trine immersion yield the question. I will quote one of scores that might be given. "Trine Immersion was the general practice of the christians from the end of the second till the close of the twelfth century. The proof of this statement is overwhelming." *Baptism of the Ages* by Cathcart. P. 15.

"The *Didache*, the catacomb pictures, and the teaching of the fathers, Greek and Latin bear witness to trine immersion as the rule and affusion or pouring as the exception. This view is supported by the best scholars, Greek, Latin and Protestant."—Schaff.

5. Single Immersion. (1) Its origin. "The Eunomians not with Trine Immersion but with one immersion, baptizing as they